

Interdistrict Magnet Schools

[Q & A]

Relevant statutes: Connecticut General Statute Section 10-264h and 10-264i et seq.

What is an interdistrict magnet school?

An interdistrict program that (i) supports racial, ethnic and economic diversity, (ii) offers a special and high quality curriculum, and (iii) requires students who are enrolled to attend at least half-time. An interdistrict magnet school program does not include a regional agricultural science and technology school, a technical high school or a regional special education center.

Existing interdistrict magnet schools offer programs in Grades Pre-Kindergarten-12. These innovative schools attract students from different districts who come together to learn in education settings that offer a range of themes or teaching philosophies that include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), environmental science, Montessori, performing arts, and global and international studies.

Who may operate an interdistrict magnet school?

An interdistrict magnet school is a publicly funded school which may be operated by local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, the Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges on behalf of Quinebaug Valley Community College and Three Rivers Community College, or by cooperative arrangements between two or more districts.

To assist the state in meeting the goals of the 2008 stipulation and order for *Milo Sheff, et al. v. William A. O'Neill, et al.*, the Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges on behalf of a regional community-technical college, the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System on behalf of a state university, the Board of Trustees of The University of Connecticut on behalf of the university, the board of governors for an independent college or university, as defined in section Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 10a-37, or the equivalent of such a board, on behalf of the independent college or university, and any other third-party not-for-profit corporation approved by the Commissioner of Education may operation an interdistrict magnet school program.

All interdistrict magnet schools must operate in accordance with the same laws and regulations applicable to public schools.

Who is eligible to attend?

Students eligible to attend Connecticut public schools. Operators of interdistrict magnet schools may limit the number of participants if there are more applicants for the school or program than there are available seats. In that case, a lottery must be conducted. No student may be denied placement or enrollment in an interdistrict magnet school or program because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, genetics, age, religion or any other protected class as defined by federal and state nondiscrimination laws.

Who pays for these schools? Will the parent have to pay tuition for the student?

Operating costs are funded through: (1) state grants; (2) contributions from local boards of education; (3) federal grants; (4) tuition charged to and paid by sending districts/towns; and (5) in some limited cases, tuition paid by the parent.

How will my child get to school?

The district where the school is located must provide transportation for its resident students. Interdistrict magnet schools or participating school districts receive state grants if they choose to transport out-of-district students, but they are not required to do so. Nonparticipating school districts are not required to provide transportation to students from their districts who attend interdistrict magnet schools. However, state law allows a school district to apply for state reimbursements for interdistrict magnet school transportation should it elect to provide transportation.

Does the school provide for the needs of special education students?

Yes. The responsibility for holding planning and placement team (PPT) meetings belongs to the district where the student lives. The interdistrict magnet school is responsible for ensuring that the student receives the services required by the student's individualized education program (IEP), whether those services are provided by the interdistrict magnet school or by the school district in which the student resides. For more information, contact the Bureau of Special Education via telephone at 860-713-6910 or visit the Web site Staff Directory at:

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/special/special_ed_bureau_phone_listing_071513.pdf

Whom do I contact to enroll my child in an Interdistrict magnet school?

Contact the interdistrict magnet school you are interested in and arrange for an appointment to see the school. If you like the school, ask for admissions or application materials. To determine if a district (or RESC) has an interdistrict magnet school visit the district's (or RESC) Web site, or go to:

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/Interdistrict_Magnet_SchoolContacts.pdf

If you are a parent/guardian or student in the greater Hartford region and wish to obtain information about, or an application for interdistrict magnet schools, or other parent choice programs such as the Open Choice Program, Connecticut technical high schools, or regional agriculture science centers, please contact the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) at 860-713-6990 or visit the RSCO Web site at: www.choiceeducation.org. You may also visit RSCO's Parent Information Center at 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 270, Hartford, CT, on weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.